Zoogoer

2009 CALENDAR

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ZOO

SEPTEMBER 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Labor Day Ramadan begins	2	3	4	5	6
◐ 7 Grandparents Day	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	● 15 Hispanic Heritage Month begins	16	17	18	19	20
21 Fiesta Musical	◑ 22 Autumnal equinox	23	24	25	26	27
28	○ 29 Rosh Hashanah begins	30				

OCTOBER 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4 Autumn Conservation Festival at CRC
5 Autumn Conservation Festival at CRC	6	◐ 7	8 Yom Kippur begins	9	10	11
12	13 Columbus Day	● 14	15	16	17 FONZ Annual Meeting	18
19	20	◑ 21	22	23 Boo at the Zoo	24 Boo at the Zoo	25 Boo at the Zoo
26 Boo at the Zoo	27	○ 28	29	30	31 Halloween	

NOVEMBER 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 American Indian Heritage Month begins
2 Daylight Saving Time ends 2 am, set clocks back	3	4 Election Day Birthday party registration begins at www.fonz.org	5	◐ 6	7	8
9	10	11 Veterans Day	12	● 13	14	15
16	17	18	◑ 19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	○ 27 Thanksgiving	28 ZooLights	29 ZooLights
30 ZooLights						

DECEMBER 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	◐ 5 ZooLights	6 ZooLights
7 ZooLights	8	9	10	11	● 12 ZooLights	13 ZooLights
14 ZooLights	15	16	17	18 ZooLights	◑ 19 ZooLights	20 ZooLights
21 Hanukkah begins Winter Solstice ZooLights	22 ZooLights	23 ZooLights	24	25 Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa begins ZooLights	○ 27 ZooLights
28 Congress enacted Endangered Species Act, 1973 ZooLights	29 ZooLights	30 ZooLights	31 New Year's Eve			

◑ LAST QUARTER ○ NEW MOON ◐ FIRST QUARTER ● FULL MOON

Capturing Moments

AT THE NATIONAL ZOO

It sounds like a dream job, but taking pictures of animals for a living isn't always a snap.

Being one of the photographers at the Smithsonian's National Zoo presents daily thrills and challenges. From documenting newborn animals to covering Zoo events, our photographers have plenty to keep them busy. They spend more than half their time on the less-glamorous duties of managing the Zoo's massive photo collection, processing images, and filling photo requests. That means they don't always have the luxury of watching and waiting for that split second when a perfect image presents itself. Yet they do manage to catch those special moments, and we showcase some of them here in our 2009 calendar.

Come visit the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park at 3001 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 2008. We're open every day except December 25, weather permitting. For hours and other information on visiting the Zoo, go to www.fonz.org or call (202) 633-4800.

Photo by Keri Nicole Ballog

Jessie Cohen first came to the National Zoo in 1979 with a background in biology, art, and photography. In those days, the Zoo had one bookcase of notebooks containing color slides and a disorganized collection of black-and-white images from 1889 to the 1970s. Today, much thanks to Jessie, her staff and volunteers, the photo collection has been meticulously catalogued, and has amassed some 500,000 images. Through the Zoo's exhibits, website, publications, and media coverage, these images reach people all over the world.

To get the right photo, Jessie has climbed trees, been bitten by birds, and had gorillas throw onions at her. But she knows that it's all part of her chosen path. "As a kid, I loved nature and spent my summers looking at amphibians, plants, and mushrooms. My dream was to have a job working on exhibits like nature dioramas," she recalls. "I ended up here—and it's not so different from that dream. As an animal photographer, I can make something tangible from the natural world."

Even after 30 years, Jessie looks forward to coming to work each day. She hopes that her photos connect people to the Zoo's animals, and ultimately make them care about the Zoo's research efforts and wildlife conservation.

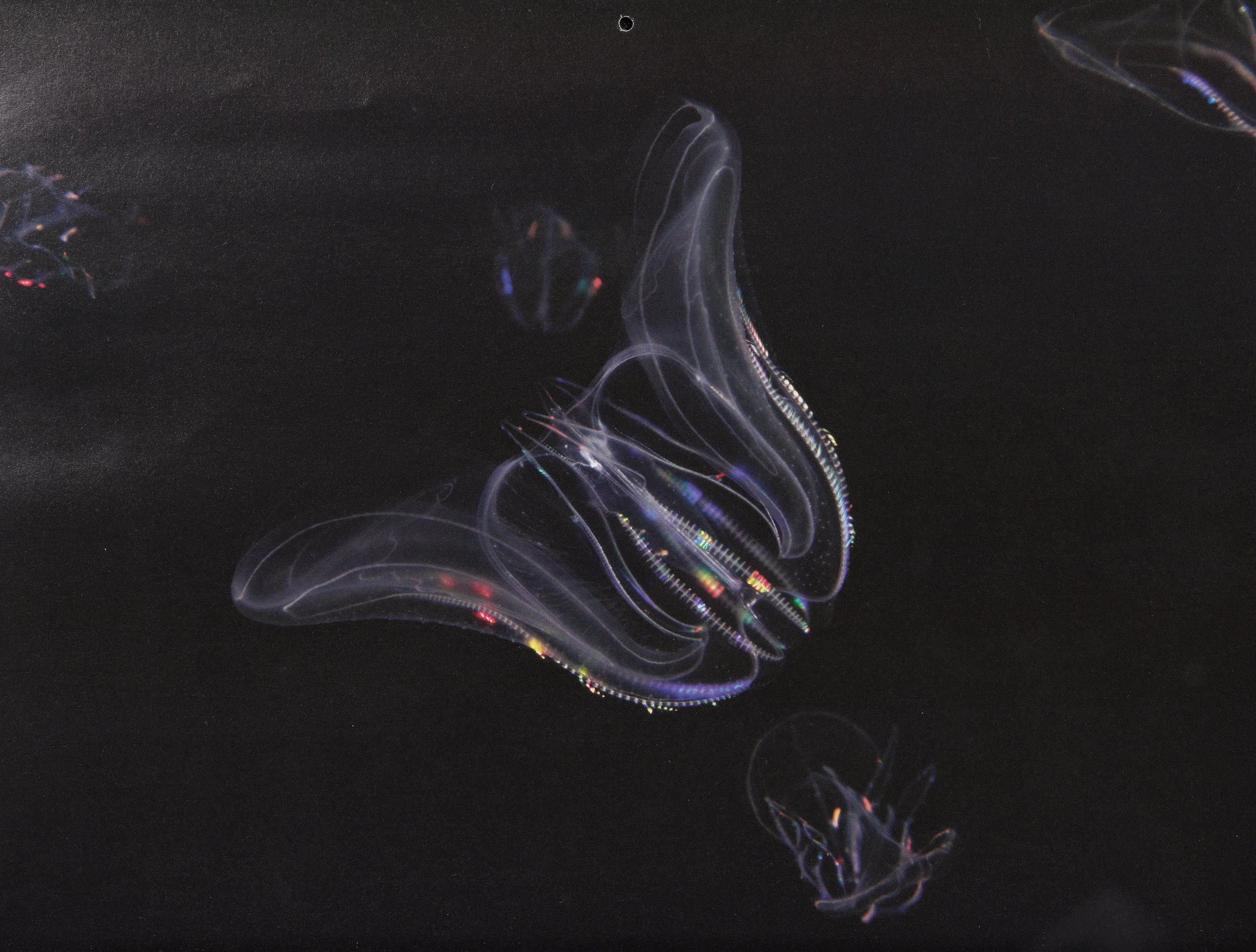
Look for photo tips and inside stories from Jessie and Mehgan in each month of this calendar!

Photo by Jessie Cohen/NZP

Mehgan Murphy joined the Zoo in 2006 and has already made a mark with her striking images. Her degrees in environmental science and biological photography give her a strong sense of these animals not just as photo subjects, but as part of our natural world. Mehgan has even had the chance to travel to Brazil to document Zoo scientists' research on golden lion tamarins in the wild.

"I not only get to work with the animals, but also with great people. The Zoo's animal care staff is incredible. They let us know when a great photo opportunity arises, and they help us get the shots." To capture the photo of the shy tammar wallaby mother that appears in this calendar (May), Mehgan relied on the Zoo keeper to enter the animal's enclosure with her until the wallaby felt at ease.

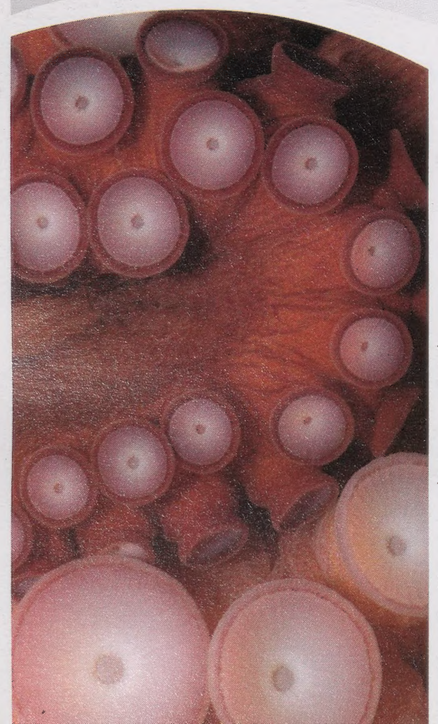
"People always say, 'What a great job—it must be so fun!' They think we just walk around the Zoo all day, taking photos of animals when we feel like it. I tell them that this job is actually stressful, but in a good way. It's very high-paced—but when you get that great shot and it makes people care about the animals, it makes it all worthwhile."



One of the otherworldly wonders in the Zoo's Invertebrate Exhibit, the **comb jelly** (*Mnemiopsis leidyi*) is not actually a jellyfish, nor does it have long stinging tentacles for feeding. Instead, it uses hair-like cilia to paddle through the water and scoop up zooplankton.

2009 January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		December 2008 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	**February 2009** S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	1 New Year's Day	2	3
◐ 4	5	6	7	8	9	● 10
11	12	13	14	15	16	◑ 17
18	19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20	21	22	23	24
25	○ 26 Chinese New Year	27	28	29	30	31



Giant Pacific octopus (*Octopus dofleini*)

Photographing our invertebrates often means shooting through glass in a dark area. To capture the comb jelly, I angled my flash so that it would refract off the cilia to create a rainbow effect, while focusing on a chosen spot in the dark. Luckily, I was able to get the shot right when one glided by. The octopus is easier, because it actually sticks itself to the glass, but you still have to angle the light to avoid flare.

—Mehgan Murphy

As the fastest land mammal, a **cheetah** (*Acinonyx jubatus*) can reach speeds of up to 64 miles per hour. With a quick burst of energy and speed, they catch their prey, such as gazelles and young wildebeest. National Zoo scientists conduct research on cheetah reproduction, endocrinology, behavior, nutrition, and genetics in order to help conserve this magnificent species.

2009 February

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Black History Month begins	◐ 2 Groundhog Day	3 **FONZ summer camp registration begins at www.fonz.org**	4	5	6	7
8	● 9	10	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday **Woo at the Zoo**	13	14 Valentine's Day
15	◑ 16 Presidents Day	17	18	19	20	21
22 Washington's Birthday	23	○ 24 Mardi Gras	25 Ash Wednesday	26	27	28

January 2009

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March 2009

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29	30	31				

The challenge in any animal photography is freezing that special moment. This shot required my 500 mm lens, since these cheetahs were pretty far away. The cubs had been running around like crazy in the snow, and one started jumping all over its mom. It stopped playing for a moment, and I captured both of them looking straight at me. *—Jessie Cohen*

A young **giant anteater** (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) will ride on its mother's back for up to a year. The pup's stripe mimics the mother's pattern so that the youngster is camouflaged. Its soft coat will eventually become the stiff, straw-like fur that characterizes adult anteaters.

2009 March

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Women's History Month begins	2 **National Zoological Park established, 1889**	3	◐ 4	5	6	7
8 Daylight Savings Time begins at 2 am	9	● 10	11	12	13	14 **Cockadoodle Zoo**
15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	◑ 18	19	20 Vernal Equinox	21
22	23	24	25	○ 26	27	28
29	30	31				

February 2009

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April 2009

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Closeups make for interesting photos. You can fill the frame with the animal's image for more impact. The Zoo's giant anteater pup was hard to distinguish when she rode on her mother's back, but this tight shot gives you an intimate look at her sleeping. *—Meghan Murphy*

About 18 inches long, **Asian small-clawed otters** (*Aonyx cinerea*) are the smallest of the world's 13 otter species. Their feet are webbed to the last toe joint, which enables them to both swim and manipulate objects, like the clams and crabs that they eat. Habitat loss, hunting, and pollution threaten the future of this playful animal.

2009 April

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 April Fools' Day **Zoo summer hours begin**	◐ 2	3	4
5 Palm Sunday	6	7 **Snore & Roar registration begins at www.fonz.org**	8 Passover begins	● 9	10 Good Friday **FONZ founded, 1958**	11
12 Easter	13 **African American Family Celebration (Easter Monday)**	14	15 Tax Day	16 **Grapes with the Apes**	◑ 17	18 **Earth Day celebration**
19	20	21	22 Earth Day	23	○ 24 Arbor Day	25
26	27	28	29	30		

March 2009

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May 2009

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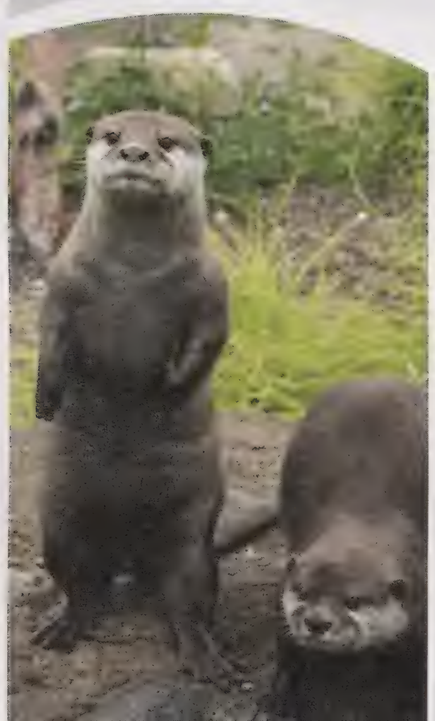

What's both fun and difficult about photographing otters is that there are so many of them moving around at once. I tracked these fast-moving animals while thinking about all the technical details: the composition of my shot, catching a light in the animal's eye, and stopping the action while maintaining depth of field.

—Mehgan Murphy

Like its kangaroo kin but smaller, the **tammar wallaby** (*Macropus eugenii*) grazes on grass and leaves, uses its versatile tail for moving and jumping, and carries its young in a pouch. The wallaby joey spends months using its mother as home base before it leaves the pouch for good.

2009 May

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			April 2009 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	June 2009 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	◐ 1	2 Bird Fest
3 Bird Fest	4	5 Cinco de Mayo	6	7	● 8	9 International Migratory Bird Day
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13	14 ZooFari	15	16
◑ 17	18	19	20	21	22	23
○ 24 31	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	◐ 30

Przewalski's horse (*Equus ferus przewalskii*)

Although we document most Zoo babies (such as the newborn Przewalski's horse, left), wallabies present a challenge since they are so shy. This new mother acted protective when I was in its enclosure, so I went back several times to let her become comfortable with me and my camera. Once she relaxed, her little joey poked its head out of her pouch just long enough for me to get this shot. Persistence and patience usually pay off. *—Mehgan Murphy*

Even for a hummingbird, the **Costa's hummingbird** (*Calypte costae*) is tiny, weighing less than a nickel. During mating season, males put on aerial displays, flying in large loops and whistling as they dive. The female lays just two eggs in a nest constructed of plant material and held together by spiderwebs.

2009 June

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
● 7	8	9	10	11	12 Guppy Gala	13
14 Flag Day	◑ 15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Father's Day Summer Solstice	○ 22	23	24	25	26	27
28	◐ 29	30				

May 2009

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July 2009

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26	27	28	29	30	31	

American flamingo (*Phoenicopterus rubber*)

The Zoo keepers told me there was a hummingbird nest with eggs in the pollinarium, and I wanted to capture it on film. The mother kept flying off and returning to feed the newly hatched chicks. I set up my tripod, camera, and flash in a tight corner, then perched on a tall stool. It was difficult to know exactly where the bird would land, so I waited and snapped each time she returned until I got this shot. *—Jessie Cohen*

Flamingoes often strike unusual poses. When they interacted like this, I had to snap quickly. *—Mehgan Murphy*

Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) are known as intelligent creatures, and the Zoo's elephants certainly demonstrate a knack for learning through exploration. Our young male elephant, Kandula, exemplifies the Zoo's leadership in Asian elephant research and conservation. As part of this leadership, the Zoo will open Elephant Trails, an expansive new habitat, in 2011.

2009 July

June 2009

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August 2009

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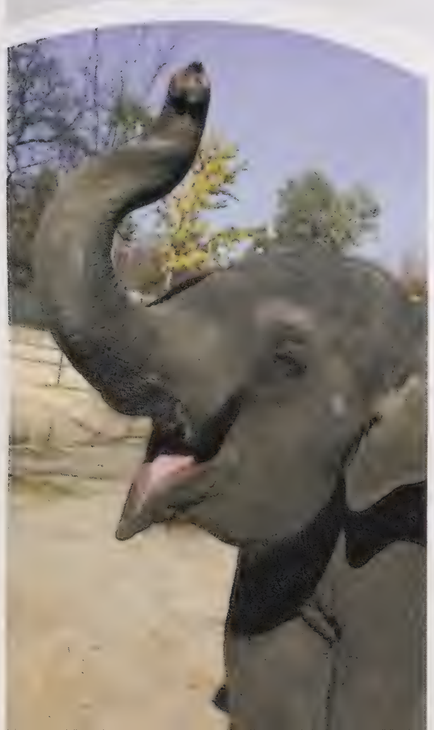
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4 Independence Day
5	6	● 7	8	9 Sunset Serenades	10	11
12	13	14	◑ 15	16 Sunset Serenades	17	18
19	20	○ 21	22	23 Sunset Serenades	24	25
26	27	◐ 28	29	30	31	



As a young animal, Kandula makes a great subject—he is full of energy and mischief. To cool off on hot summer days, he likes to swim and play in the water, which provides an excellent opportunity for taking great action shots. *—Jessie Cohen*

They resemble both raccoons and giant pandas, but **red pandas** (*Ailurus fulgens*) are considered their own species. Soft, dense fur covers their entire bodies—even the soles of their feet. Like giant pandas, red pandas have thumb-like adaptations that help them grip bamboo, the staple of their diet.

2009 August

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				July 2009 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	September 2009 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	1
2	3	4	● 5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	◑ 13	14	15
16	17	18	19	○ 20 Brew at the Zoo	21 Ramadan begins	22 Celebrate Asian Elephants
23 30	24 31	25	26	◐ 27	28	29

They say that the eyes are the windows to the soul, so when I photograph animal faces, I want to be sure that the eyes are in sharp focus, ideally with a "catch light"—that little white spot that gives the eyes life. With red pandas, I've actually had to climb a tree to get the best eye-level vantage point.

—Jessie Cohen

The **Aldabra tortoise** (*Geochelone gigantean*), one of the largest tortoise species, can weigh more than 500 pounds. They achieve this hefty size on a mostly vegetarian diet, but they also eat small invertebrates and carrion. Perhaps these creatures hold the secret to longevity—Aldabra tortoises can live between 100 to 200 years of age.

September

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	● 4	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10	◑ 11	12
13 Grandparents Day celebration	14	15 Hispanic Heritage Month begins	16	17	○ 18 Rosh Hashanah begins	19
20 Fiesta Musical	21	22 Autumnal Equinox	23	24	◐ 25	26
27 Yom Kippur begins	28	29	30			

August 2009

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October 2009

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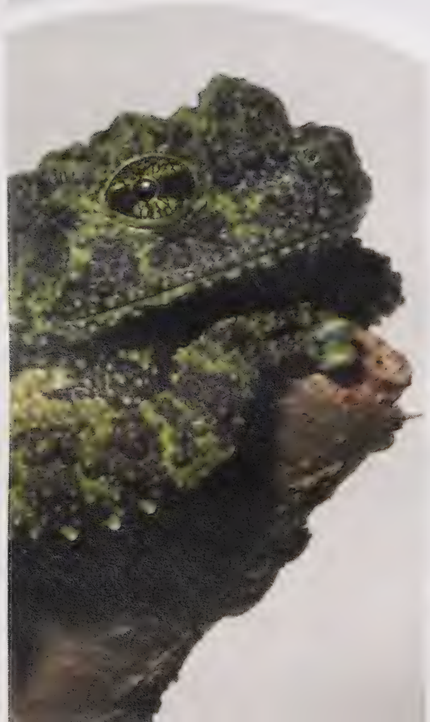

Vietnamese mossy frog (*Theloderma corticale*)

For animal portraits, I like to get eye-to-eye with them, even if it means lying on my stomach or climbing a tree. And when I'm selecting photos, I look for images that convey humor. The grass hanging from the tortoise's mouth and the purposeful pose of this mossy frog set these photos apart.

—Jessie Cohen

With nine-foot arm spans, **orangutans** (*Pongo pygmaeus*) are the largest animals that can brachiate, which means they are able to swing their arms while their feet hang free. They literally hang out in the branches of fruit trees, constructing sleeping platforms by bending branches together. The Zoo's orangutans have been the focus of important research on how they think.

2009 October

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		September 2009 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	**November 2009** S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	1	2	3 Autumn Conservation Festival at CRC
● 4 Autumn Conservation Festival at CRC	5	6	7	8	9	10
◑ 11	12 Columbus Day	13	14	15	16 FONZ Annual Meeting	17
○ 18	19	20	21	22 Boo at the Zoo	23 Boo at the Zoo	24 Boo at the Zoo
◐ 25 Boo at the Zoo	26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween

An interesting thing about the orangutans at the Great Ape House is that they recognize people. When I arrive with my camera, some of them come right up to the glass to see me. Because they are so expressive, it's easy to see individual character and personality in their faces. I try to convey that to the viewer.

—Jessie Cohen

Though the **giant panda** (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*) is generally solitary, a cub will stay with its mother for one to three years. Born in 2005 at the National Zoo, Tai Shan has thrived in the company of his mother, Mei Xiang. His youthful antics in his Asia Trail habitat delight Zoo visitors. Tai Shan's birth symbolizes the Zoo's leadership in conservation of these endangered bears.

2009 November

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 American Indian Heritage Month begins Daylight Savings Time ends at 2 am **Zoo winter hours begin**	● 2	3 Election Day **Birthday party registration begins**	4	5	6	7
8	◑ 9	10	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14
15	○ 16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	◐ 24	25	26 Thanksgiving	27 **ZooLights**	28 **ZooLights**
29 **ZooLights**	30					

October 2009

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December 2009

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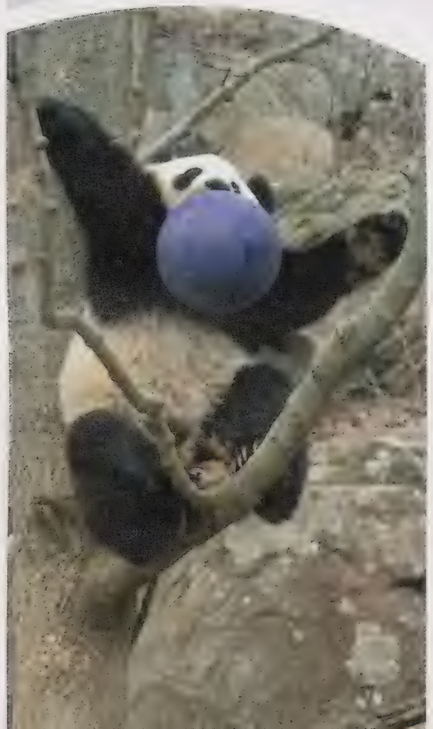

We can never have too many panda photos. But as compelling as pandas are, they pose some photographic challenges. On sunny days their black-and-white fur lacks detail, and their dark eyes become indistinguishable from their black eye patches. Shooting early in the morning, on overcast days, or using flash helps bring out the texture in their fur and reveal their eyes. *—Jessie Cohen*

With its regal demeanor, the **African lion** (*Panthera leo*) has long been a symbol of power. A lion's roar can be heard up to five miles away. Male lions defend the territory of a pride, or group, of lions. But it is the females who do the hunting, stalking prey such as zebras and wildebeest.

2009 December

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	● 2	3	4 ZooLights	5 ZooLights
6 ZooLights	7	◑ 8	9	10	11 Hanukkah begins ZooLights	12 ZooLights
13 ZooLights	14	15	○ 16	17 ZooLights	18 ZooLights	19 ZooLights
20 ZooLights	21 Winter Solstice ZooLights	22 ZooLights	23 ZooLights	◐ 24 ZooLights	25 Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa ZooLights
27 ZooLights	28 Congress enacted Endangered Species Act, 1973 ZooLights	29 ZooLights	30 ZooLights	● 31 New Year's Eve		

November 2009

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January 2010

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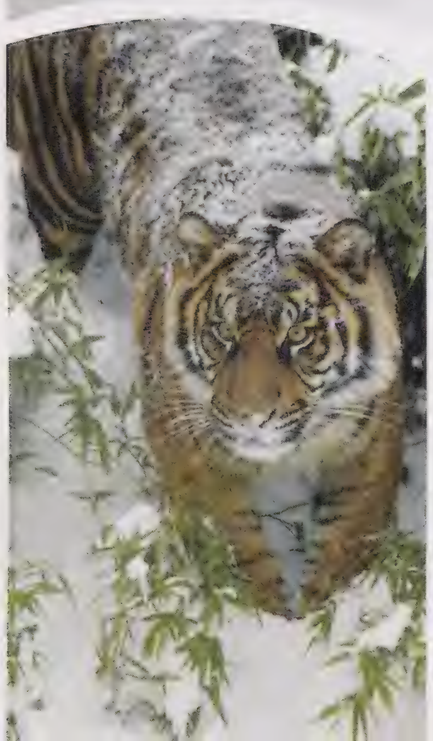

Siberian tiger (*Panthera tigris*)

It was snowing heavily, and I had a bag over my camera to keep it dry. Luke, the Zoo's male lion, came out and sat for a second. He kept looking up at the sky as if he was studying the falling snow. I captured that moment just before he decided to seek cover near some bamboo. *—Mehgan Murphy*

We use very long lenses and heavy tripods to photograph the great cats. People think Zoo photographers get close to the animals, but that's not always possible, so we need the right equipment to get the best images and fill the frame. *—Jessie Cohen*

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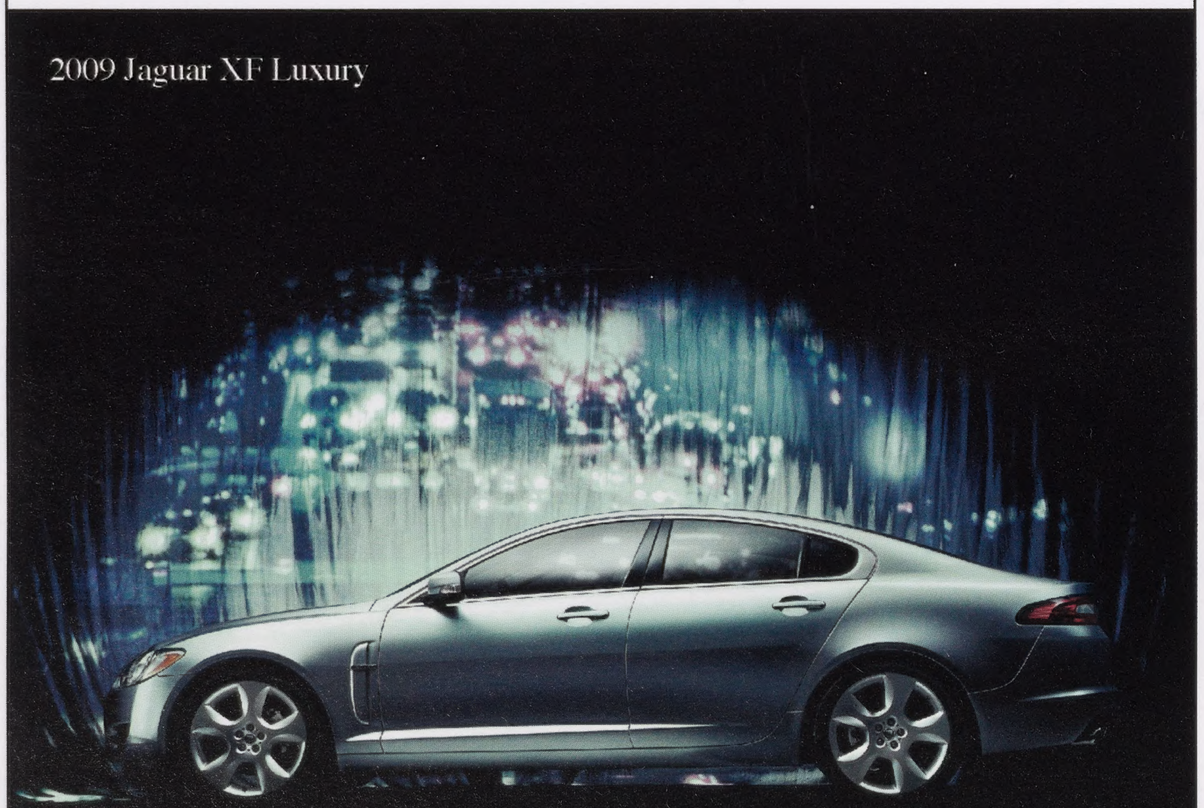
JAGUAR

Rosenthal Jaguar Land Rover
Tysons Corner & Chantilly

2009 Jaguar XF Luxury



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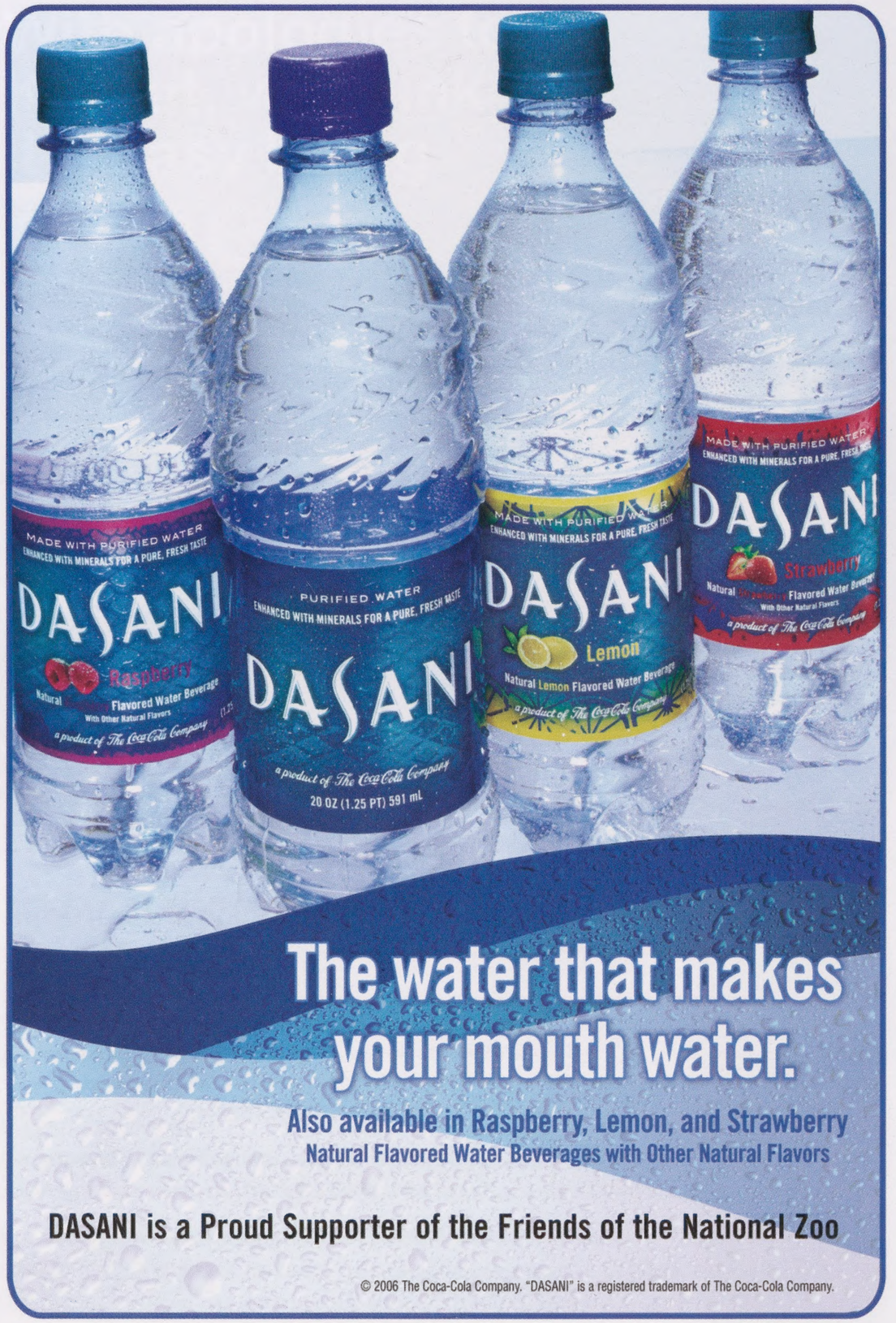

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Cover: The Zoo's African lion, Luke, studies the falling snow. Photo by Meghan Murphy/NZP.

Above: Western crowned pigeon (*Goura Cristata*). Photo by Meghan Murphy/NZP

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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FEBRUARY 2010

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MARCH 2010

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APRIL 2010

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